

Duxbury Clipper, Thursday, March 21, 1974

DOWN MEMORY LANE

(Many years ago we interviewed the late "Sadie" Paulding and wrote the following account. Many of the persons mentioned are now deceased. -- Ed.)

The late Miss Sara Paulding, who taught in Duxbury schools for 46 years, remembered when pumps had to be thawed out and when, during blistery days when the wind whistled through the rafters, a roaring wood fire was kept going in the schoolroom. "We kept the temperature up around 90, I recall, when I taught in the Millbrook School, which is the present site of the American Legion Hall (before the hall was remodeled). And never shall I forget the old stovepipe that ran the whole length of the room. I also remember that the stovepipe in the South Duxbury School (later the home of the Girl Scouts and Brownies) fell down once and covered the children with soot. Conditions were rougher in those days."

Began Teaching in 1904

Miss Paulding began teaching in 1904 in the "Knowledge Box" in Ashdod. She taught the first 7 grades-all in one room-for 3 years before moving to Millbrook School. "My 20 years at Millbrook were the happiest of my life. The Millbrook neighbors were wonderful to me. Once a week Mrs. Percy Walker brought me a market-basket full of delicious food-a boiled dinner or roast chicken and all the fixings. At that time we teachers took cold lunches to school as did the children. Priscilla Alden who lived in the house on the corner of Route 3-A and St. George St. often brought in a hot oyster stew or some such dish on Thursdays. Betty Bolton Bencordo, the late librarian at DHS, lived then in the house later occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Percy Walker. I often called on Betty for help when

entertainment programs were to be arranged, and she often helped me put up the Christmas trees. I had her twin brothers, John and Joseph, in class, as well as Walter Prince, his children and grandchildren.

"I remember when the present Mrs. William Ferrell of Chestnut St. used to bring her dog into the Millbrook School and let it doze near the big iron stove in which we used to burn 4-foot logs. I had all the sons of Percy Walker in class. I still have in what I now call my "hopeless chest," the engraved silver spoon given me by Edward Walker, son of Alpheus. I suppose that during my 46 years of teaching I have had close to 1500 students, and many of them are still here. I had all 4 of Dr. J. Newton Shirley's children in class. I remember Penny Converse very well, too. She sat down front, a sweet girl whom I never suspected would later have such an adventurous career, yanking lions by the tail and all that. Ann Converse was a quiet student, but I think I did have to spank her once or twice."

How many schools were there in Duxbury in 1904? There was one in North Duxbury (a section then called "Crooked Lane"); one in Ashdod; another in Millbrook; one in Island Creek (a small building later moved to the rear of DHS, where it is now the Home Economics "cottage"; there was a 5th school in South Duxbury, and the Village School was behind the late Village School on Washington St. Miss Paulding herself attended this school for the first 5 grades before moving to the "Grammar School" in the Unitarian Parish House for the 6th and 7th grades. She attended Partridge Academy later, where she was president and valedictorian of a class of 8, which included only one boy. (One of the girls was Ethel Sweetser Wyman, Cliff Syman's mother). Herbert Walker was the "very popular" principal of Partridge Academy when Miss Paulding went there. There was also a school in Tarklin and the only other school

she remembers is the Point School, behind the Catholic Church.

When Miss Paulding began her teaching career pupils attended classes from 9-4-later until 3:30. She used to ride a bicycle to the Millbrook School, as did Blanche Peterson (Mrs. Leroy Peterson), who taught at the school in South Duxbury. "Blanche was always after me to swap jobs with her so we could be nearer our schools, but I liked Millbrook too much to leave. One day we cycled past each other in a pouring rain. 'I hope you drown,' she said, and that was the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

After she left Millbrook she was assigned to the Village School in 1927, and there she remained until she went to DHS in 1948. She has been at the new Elementary School since the fall of 1950.

Miss Paulding recalls that students often rode horses or came in horse-drawn buggies when she attended Partridge Academy. The horses were stabled in sheds behind the Unitarian Church. In those days Duxbury had a small jail behind the almshouse, and according to Miss Paulding, when tramps came to town they often spent the night either in the almshouse or in jail, depending on how much they had had to drink. This jail, still with its barred windows, has been moved down the hill behind the Unitarian Church and is now used as an office by the Maintenance Department.

Miss Paulding, who is a graduate of Hyannis Normal School, and who has taken summer courses at Harvard and Columbia, as well as correspondence and extension courses, is an Ezra Weston descendant, and there was a time when her ancestors owned much of Powder Point and a good deal of the property adjoining Washington St. (The Westons owned the south side of Powder Point and the Pauldings the north, leaving some property on the tip for the Briggs family). There was

a Paulding Candy Shop on King Caesar Rd., where jars of striped candy were sold. Also, a Paulding shipyard on Powder Point Ave. across from Blue Fish River where ships were launched. Her father George was born in the house later occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur LeBaron; her mother and herself in Newbury, Vt.

For a time she lived as a girl in what is now the Oliver L. Barker house on Washington St. Next door lived Joshua Cushing, father of Mrs. William Facey, and across the street was the Winsor & Peterson general store. When the children played tag, this store was one goal, she says, her house the other. We asked what other games they played.

"We had candy pulls, birthday parties and often went to 'balls' in Mattakesett Hall, which was built by the Oddfellows. And now and then a game called post office was played." This game has apparently been played since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary as Dan Webster used to say.

Miss Paulding has a couple of portraits of herself that were painted by a French artist, M. Pritchard, who boarded at the William Peterson house (later occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Elbert A. Harvey). "He used to give me a bar of chocolate or a banana if I posed for him. One picture has me standing behind the Ruby Graves house in Bumblebee Lane. The green daubs in the picture are cabbages, the brown daubs me."